

R 261055Z OCT 01  
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7227  
INFO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE  
IRAN COLLECTIVE  
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
AMCONSUL DUBAI  
NSC WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 006815

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/01/2011

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [IR](#)

SUBJECT: IRANIAN VIEWS ON U.S. AND LIFE IN TEHRAN

11. (U) CLASSIFIED BY POLCONS STUART JONES FOR REASONS 1.5  
(B) AND (D).

12. (C) SUMMARY. AN IRANIAN VISA APPLICANT CLAIMED THAT RELIGIOUS VIGILANTES KIDNAPPED HIM AND BEAT HIM FOR SEVERAL DAYS AFTER THEY CAUGHT HIM AT ONE OF TEHRAN'S CANDLELIGHT VIGILS FOLLOWING THE SEPTEMBER 11 ATTACKS. ANOTHER YOUNG IRANIAN IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANT STATED THAT MANY YOUNG IRANIANS ARE TIRED OF IRANIAN PRESIDENT KHATAMI AND DO NOT BELIEVE THAT KHATAMI CAN BRING ABOUT POLITICAL REFORM. AFTER A TRIP TO TEHRAN, A U.S. BORN AMCIT TOLD CONOFF THAT TEHRAN APPEARED ECONOMICALLY BUSTLING. SHE NOTED THAT TEHRAN LOOKED CLEAN AND THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL NEW BUILDINGS UNDER CONSTRUCTION; FRUIT AND VEGETABLES WERE PLENTIFUL IN THE LOCAL STORES. END SUMMARY.

-----  
IRANIAN SYMPATHY OVER ATTACKS  
-----

13. (C) NUMEROUS IRANIAN VISA APPLICANTS HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DEEP SYMPATHIES TO CONOFF IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS AFTER THE TERRORIST ATTACKS AT THE WORLD TRADE CENTER AND PENTAGON. BEFORE BEGINNING THEIR INTERVIEWS, NEARLY ALL IRANIAN VISA APPLICANTS TAKE A MOMENT TO EXPRESS THEIR SORROW OVER THE ATTACKS.

14. (C) ONE APPLICANT CLAIMED TO HAVE BEEN PRESENT AT A CANDLELIGHT VIGIL HELD IN TEHRAN DAYS AFTER THE TERRORIST ATTACKS. A YOUNG MALE FROM ESFAHAN, HE LIFTED HIS SHIRT TO SHOW SCARS FROM A WHIPPING HE RECEIVED AND SCARS ON HIS WRISTS AND ANKLES FROM BEING TIED TO A WALL. THE APPLICANT CLAIMED THAT HE WAS IN A CENTRAL AREA OF TEHRAN WITH APPROXIMATELY 600 MEN AND WOMEN OBSERVING THE QUIET CANDLELIGHT VIGIL. HE INDICATED THAT THREE BASIJIS GRABBED HIM, BLINDFOLDED HIM AND HELD HIM HOSTAGE FOR SIX DAYS. THE BASIJIS BEAT WITH A TELEPHONE CORD FOR TWO DAYS AND ALLEGEDLY ACCUSED HIM OF FOMENTING REVOLUTION. THE APPLICANT STATED THAT ORDINARY IRANIANS WERE APPALLED AT THE TERRORIST INCIDENT IN THE U.S. AND WANTED TO DEMONSTRATE THEIR SOLIDARITY AGAINST VIOLENCE. THE APPLICANT COULD NOT INDICATE HOW MANY OTHERS HAD BEEN CAUGHT BY ROAMING GANGS OF BASIJI VIGILANTES.

-----  
IRANIAN PRESIDENT LOSING LUSTER  
-----

15. (C) CONOFF QUERIED ANOTHER YOUNG IRANIAN IMMIGRANT VISA APPLICANT REGARDING POPULAR VIEWS OF IRANIAN PRESIDENT MOHAMMED KHATAMI. THE APPLICANT STATED IN PERFECT ENGLISH THAT MANY YOUNG IRANIANS ARE TIRED OF THE LACK OF POLITICAL REFORMS. MANY YOUNG PEOPLE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT KHATAMI CAN TRULY CHANGE THE CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION. THE APPLICANT STATED THAT YOUNG PEOPLE FEEL DISILLUSIONED AND BETRAYED BY THE LACK OF PROGRESS BY KHATAMI. ASKED ABOUT RELIGIOUS LEADER KHAMANEI, THE APPLICANT SAID NOTHING. ON POPULAR VIEWS REGARDING THE U.S. BOMBINGS IN AFGHANISTAN, THE APPLICANT STATED THAT IRANIANS DO NOT CONDONE VIOLENCE. HE ADDED THAT MANY IRANIANS HAD NO STRONG FEELINGS TOWARD THE AFGHANS. INSTEAD, PEOPLE ARE MORE INTERESTED IN DAILY SURVIVAL IN A WEAK ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT.

¶6. (C) MANY YOUNG VISA APPLICANTS INDICATED TO CONOFF THAT LIFE IN IRAN IS COMFORTABLE. MOST LIVE AT HOME WITH THEIR PARENTS AND ARE PUTTING OFF GETTING MARRIED. MANY IRANIAN STUDENTS ARE NOT QUICK TO CRITICIZE THEIR COUNTRY OR ECONOMY AND RESPOND THAT LIFE IS FINE. UNDERLYING THIS SENTIMENT, HOWEVER, IS A LARGE NUMBER OF EDUCATED STUDENTS THAT ARE APPLYING TO GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN THE U.S. MANY UNIVERSITY-EDUCATED STUDENTS SAID THEY ARE UNABLE TO OBTAIN WORK IN IRAN AFTER GRADUATING AND VIEW CONTINUED STUDIES IN THE U.S. AS AN ESCAPE, EVEN IF THEY RETURN TO IRAN AFTER FINISHING.

-----  
OUTSIDER'S VIEW OF TEHRAN LIFE  
-----

¶7. (C) A U.S. BORN AMERICAN CITIZEN REPORTED THAT TEHRAN APPEARED ECONOMICALLY BUSTLING AND WAS OTHERWISE RELATIVELY CALM. IN TEHRAN FOR SEVERAL WEEKS FINALIZING ADOPTION PROCEEDINGS FOR A STEPCHILD WITH HER IRANIAN BORN U.S. CITIZEN HUSBAND, SHE STATED THAT DURING HER TRIP, WHICH TOOK HER TO MANY GOVERNMENT AND LOCAL OFFICES IN CENTRAL TEHRAN, SHE RECEIVED GOOD TREATMENT AND THAT PEOPLE WERE GENERALLY "NICE." SHE NOTED THAT TEHRAN APPEARED RELATIVELY CLEAN AND THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL NEW BUILDINGS BEING CONSTRUCTED. MANY OTHER IRANIAN VISA APPLICANTS HAVE CONFIRMED THAT TEHRAN HAS SEVERAL LARGE BUILDINGS BEING BUILT. THE AMCIT STATED THAT DURING HER TRIP THE LOCAL WATER WAS TURNED OFF IN DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE CITY DURING THE WEEK. THE HIGH-RISE BUILDING WHERE SHE WAS STAYING, HOWEVER, HAD ITS OWN WATER SUPPLY AND DID NOT SUFFER FROM THE CUTOFFS. SHE INDICATED THAT THE LOCAL IRANIANS SHE MET APPEARED HAPPY AND THAT THERE WAS PLENTY OF FOOD, FRUIT AND VEGETABLES IN THE LOCAL STORES. HER HUSBAND NOTED THAT LOCAL POLICE ONLY HARASSED TAXI DRIVERS, STOPPING THEM AND EXTORTING SMALL BRIBES. THEY BOTH ADDED THAT ONLY ONCE DID THEY FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE TRAVELING AROUND THE CITY. AT ONE POINT IN THE TRIP, THEY LEFT A LOCAL NEIGHBORHOOD AREA AFTER POLICE TOLD THEM THAT SOME UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WERE DEMONSTRATING AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT.

PEARSON